

CHAPTER III. VISION FOR THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

Community residents, representatives from partner agencies, and staff contributed to create a vision for future therapeutic recreation and related human services. The City of San José Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services vision, mission, goals and strategies were refined by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and the Advisory Board. These elements provide a strategic framework for enhancing therapeutic recreation and relates human services to the San Jose community.

The elements of the strategic framework are:

- A vision for facilities and services;
- The mission of the City's therapeutic services;
- Goals that frame the future direction for services and facilities;
- Strategies that describe how the City's services to persons with disabilities will achieve its vision, mission and goals; and
- Performance measures that will be utilized to measure success at achieving this vision.



"The gathering of people in a community lets you meet people; it's nice to know you have something in common."



The vision reflects what the Strategic Plan aspires to create. It describes the preferred future for San Jose, which is supported by the City of San José programs, services, and facilities. This vision echoes the overall vision for City of San José Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services.

The vision for the future is:



***Communities of people
connected by play,
hope and joy in life***

The vision reflects San Jose's remarkably diverse population with multiple communities. These **communities** provide people with a sense of belonging, a common identity, and a shared purpose. Communities provide familiarity, acceptance, and support. They naturally result from people's need to live interdependently with others.

To thrive as individuals and as a larger society, people must feel **connected** to others around them in positive ways. This is especially important to people with disabilities, who may feel isolated and are often excluded because of architectural or attitudinal barriers. Recreation opportunities foster community connection, both in spirit and in activities.

Recreation provides an opportunity to experience **play** - an essential human activity. Therapeutic recreation helps individuals identify new ways of doing favorite activities and provides opportunities to explore new activities that are adapted for their needs. Recreation also promotes wellness, boosting physical, mental and emotional well-being. Recreation, sports, fitness and social activities allow all San Jose residents to relax, refresh, and explore. Involvement in recreational activities enhances personal health and wellness as well as improves community livability. Through recreation, individuals with disabilities can discover renewed **hope and joy in life.**



Mission

The mission describes the primary purpose of the City's therapeutic and related human services, programs, and facilities. This mission evolved from input received during the Strategic Plan community involvement process.

The mission is:



To provide a continuum of services to improve health and wellness, including special programs and inclusive recreation

The mission reflects the need to expand facilities and provide a range of services to better serve the varied abilities, needs, ages and interests of persons with disabilities.

Goals

Eight goals for the City of San José were developed during the strategic planning process. These goals describe how the City's therapeutic services will strive to enhance and enrich the lives of persons with disabilities. Strategies, services and facilities are focused toward achieving these goals and, thereby, improving the lives of San Jose community members with disabilities.

The goals are:

- A. *Improve health and fitness*
Health and wellness enhance personal enjoyment and satisfaction with life. Exercise, diet and healthy living habits improve health and fitness, enabling people to feel recharged and invigorated physically, mentally and emotionally. Health and wellness are critical factors in achieving or maintaining independence and in reducing institutionalization.
- B. *Enhance independence*
Therapeutic recreation helps individuals with disabilities learn skills needed to live independently, such as mobility skills, self-care skills, home management skills, and social and recreation skills. Recreation also provides support services that contribute to emotional well-being and reduce isolation and loneliness. A primary goal of therapeutic recreation services is to promote independent living and reduce the need for institutionalization. For those with disabilities, regaining and maintaining strength, balance and fitness expand the range of activities they can perform and enjoy independently. Acquiring and maintaining independent living skills allow individuals with disabilities to remain in the community, enjoying life among family and friends.

C. *Improve social skills*

Socializing and social acceptance are critical to human well-being. Recreation programs offer opportunities for people with mental or physical disabilities to further develop their social skills in a supportive and encouraging setting. These skills enhance opportunities for community integration.

D. *Increase self-esteem*

Good health, fitness, independence, and accomplishments achieved through recreation generate positive self-esteem. Recreation and fitness activities promote skill-building and offer individuals with disabilities opportunities to set and achieve personal goals.

E. *Connect people and families with community resources*

Recreation activities foster a sense of belonging and provide an opportunity to be engaged in a larger, lively community. This reduces the isolation often experienced by individuals with disabilities and their families.

F. *Provide opportunities to contribute to society*

Contributing one's time and talents to the larger community not only benefits society, but also gives life meaning and significance to people of all abilities. By enhancing the volunteer opportunities for individuals with disabilities, therapeutic recreation services offer individuals with disabilities many opportunities to contribute to

and enhance the lives of others in our community. Through volunteerism, many individuals with disabilities will also learn job readiness skills leading to employment.

G. *Promote community integration*

The City of San José's Office of Therapeutic Services can provide leadership for integrating people with disabilities into community activities. By actively promoting opportunities for inclusion, and by educating and assisting others, therapeutic recreation can increase opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy community recreation activities.

H. *Promote play, hope and joy*

Play, hope and joy are the heart of life. By fostering physical fitness, recreation, social interaction and community connection, therapeutic services nurtures joyful life and the human spirit.

Strategies

The following seven strategies will guide the provision of future therapeutic recreation services and describe ways to accomplish the above stated goals.

1. Increase community outreach and participation in therapeutic recreation
2. Expand specialized programs for people with disabilities
3. Enhance inclusion in existing programs and facilities

4. Ensure that the needs of disabled persons are considered in all city and neighborhood planning efforts
5. Develop a Recreation and Wellness Center that will serve as a "hub" for therapeutic recreation programs
6. Enhance staffing levels and capabilities to deliver quality services for people with disabilities
7. Maintain maximum organizational efficiency to become accountable for delivery of quality services to people with disabilities

Chapter VI. describes these strategies in detail.